

Loving Cup Award, which annually recognizes citizens who have worked unselfishly for the community without expectation of public acclaim or material reward; the National Conference of Christians and Jews Weiss Award, which is presented annually to four outstanding community leaders who have been influential in promoting the advancement of social understanding and care; and the National Council of Negro Women Outstanding Woman Award. In addition to earning numerous awards, Mrs. Chase serves on the boards of many non-profit organizations, including the Arts Council of New Orleans, the New Orleans Museum of Art, and the Urban League.

Mrs. Chase has been and continues to be an inspiration to all who know her. It is with a heartfelt sincerity that I ask my colleagues to join me along with Mrs. Chase's family in recognizing the life and many accomplishments of this extraordinary woman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PENNSYLVANIA'S FALLEN HEROES

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, as we confront a whole range of difficult issues at the end of this year and at the end of this Congress, we should also be reminded we have fighting men and women serving for us all over the world.

We think especially tonight of those serving in Afghanistan and those who served prior to that time in Iraq. At various times we have come to the floor and recited the names of those who were killed in action, and tonight I am joined by my colleague Senator TOOMEY to read the names of Pennsylvanians who gave, as Lincoln said, the last full measure of devotion to their country—those who have been killed in action in Afghanistan over the course of parts of 2011 and 2012.

I yield the floor for my colleague, Senator TOOMEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague, the senior Senator from Pennsylvania, for organizing this brief tribute that is so much deserved by the men and women we are acknowledging today.

I wish to begin by extending my deepest condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of these Pennsylvania heroes whom we are going to acknowledge this evening. In the lives our servicemembers led and the cause for which they died, these folks represent all that is great about America.

Many enlisted right after graduating from high school, and during those very tough and grueling days and weeks in basic training they had probably never heard of places such as Anbar Province in Iraq, the Tangi Valley of Afghanistan or the other areas in those nations where they fought and ended up dying for our country.

But these Pennsylvanians join a long line of soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and Coast Guard members who have given the supreme sacrifice to their country, a line that extends well back in the latter part of the 20th century and includes World War II, the Korean war, the Vietnam war, and of course the global war on terrorism.

It is no accident that Pennsylvania has suffered very heavily in this conflict, as it has in other conflicts throughout our Nation's history. I think it is because in towns across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, towns and cities such as Dallastown, Easton, Philadelphia, and Erie, there are certain values that are deeply rooted in these communities: importance of family, importance of faith, importance of community, and the importance of public service, including very much the service to this Nation.

The conviction that freedom is worth defending is one of those convictions and the belief that a cause worth fighting for is not just someone else's responsibility. These are the values that have shaped these men and women, their families, their churches and houses of worship, and their communities.

These values were exemplified in the lives of our fallen men and women in service, and they will forever be honored by Pennsylvanians as the native sons and daughters of our great Commonwealth for their service to the country.

I will read the names of the men and women who have made the supreme sacrifice for courage in this conflict, and Senator CASEY will complete the list: PFC David Anthony Jefferson, U.S. Army, Philadelphia; SGT Louis Robert Fastuca, U.S. Army, West Chester; SPC Jesse David Reed, U.S. Army, Orefield; LCpl Abram Larue Howard, U.S. Marine Corps, Williamsport; SPC Dale Justin Kridlo, U.S. Army, Hughesstown; SPC Anthony Vargas, U.S. Army, Reading; SSG Sean Michael Flannery, U.S. Army, Wyomissing; GySgt Justin Edward Schmalstieg, U.S. Marine Corps, Pittsburgh; MSG Benjamin Franklin Bitner, U.S. Army, Greencastle; 1LT Demetrius Montaz Frison, U.S. Army, Lancaster; SSG Edward David Mills Jr., U.S. Army, Newcastle; Sgt Joseph Michael Garrison, U.S. Marine Corps, New Bethlehem; Ssgt Patrick Ryan Dolphin, U.S. Marine Corps, Moscow; Sgt Christopher Matthew Wrinkle, U.S. Marine Corps, Dallastown; PO1 Michael Joseph Strange, U.S. Navy, Philadelphia; TSgt Daniel Lee Zerbe, U.S. Air Force, York; SSG Eric Scott Holman, U.S. Army, Evans City; Lt. Col. Christopher Keith Raible, U.S. Marine Corps, North Huntingdon; CPO Nicolas David Checque, U.S. Navy, Monroeville; CDR Job W. Price, U.S. Navy, Pottstown; and finally, MAJ Wesley James Hinkley, U.S. Army, Cumberland City.

I yield the floor to the senior Senator.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. I thank the Senator for reading the first half of our names, and I will continue with 20 more names: Sgt Derek Lee Shanfield, U.S. Marine Corps, Hastings, PA; SFC Robert James Pike, U.S. Army, Conneautville; SFC Bryan Alan Hoover, U.S. Army, West Elizabeth; Sgt Joseph Davis Caskey, U.S. Marine Corps, Pittsburgh; LCpl Joshua Thomas Twigg, U.S. Marine Corps, Indiana; CPL Joshua Alexander Harton, U.S. Army, Bethlehem; LCpl Ralph John Fabbri, U.S. Marine Corps, Gallitzin; SSG David Jee Weigle, U.S. Army, Philadelphia; Cpl Eric Michael Torbet, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, Lancaster; CPL Jarrid Lee King, U.S. Army, Erie; SGT Robert Curtis Sisson, Jr., U.S. Army, Aliquippa; PFC John Francis Kihm, U.S. Army, Philadelphia; 1SG Kenneth Brian Elwell, U.S. Army, Erie; SGT Edward William Koehler III, U.S. Army, Lebanon; SSG Brian Keith Mowery, U.S. Army, Halifax; SSG Kenneth Rowland Vangiesen, U.S. Army, Erie; SrA Bryan Richard Bell, U.S. Air Force, Erie; CPT Michael Cean Braden, U.S. Army, Lock Haven; PFC Cameron James Stambaugh, U.S. Army, Spring Grove; and finally, SSG Brandon Robert Pepper, U.S. Army, York, PA.

As I conclude the list of Pennsylvanians who were killed in action over approximately a 2-year time period in Afghanistan—and one of the names that was read was killed in Iraq—we remember and think of them, and obviously we are paying tribute to them on a night like tonight. At the same time, we are also thinking of their families as we pay tribute to them.

I am reminded of the great recording artist Bruce Springsteen. One of his songs was entitled "You're Missing," and the refrain over and over again is "you're missing." He was able to sing, but I won't. The song goes something like this: You're missing when I shut out the lights; you're missing when I close my eyes; you're missing when I see the sunrise.

For all those families out there who lost someone in Afghanistan, Iraq, or in other conflicts, we are thinking of them tonight because they are missing someone in the midst of this end-of-the-year and holiday season. We are remembering them tonight and paying tribute to those they loved and lost and also remembering them in our prayers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

THE FISCAL CLIFF

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, it is indeed unique that on New Year's Eve we are in session. We still have some very important business we need to take care of for our Nation. We should not have put our country in this position. We should have acted well before December 31. We all understand that, but it is important that we get this work done in the remaining hours of this term of Congress.

On Thursday, the 113th Congress will take the oath of office and we will start a new Congress. Before that, we must get the work of this Congress finished. At a minimum, we need to deal with the impact of tax rates that would go up for every taxpayer in this country unless we take action before this Congress adjourns.

We need to protect middle-income families. We all talked about it. We know that needs to be done. We need to protect Americans from the tax increases that will take effect for the overwhelming majority of Americans—those who are middle-income taxpayers. We need to do this first and foremost because it would create an incredible burden on working families to pay an extra \$2,000 to \$4,000 of taxes, and we also need to do it to help our economy. That type of money coming out of the economy through additional tax increases would have a very detrimental impact on our economy, which is coming out of a tough period.

We also need to deal with what we call sequestration. I was listening to the senior Senator from Maryland, chair of the Appropriations Committee, Senator MIKULSKI, talk about the effects of sequestration. She is right. Some people may not understand that term, but what it means is that there will be dramatic cuts in governmental agencies, which will not only affect the performance of those agencies but also the contracts they let to the private sector. It will affect not only our domestic budget but our military budget. She went through a lot of the different impacts it will have, from children who are in jeopardy of losing their support from Head Start, to our researchers being denied the resources they need in order to do work that is vital to our economy.

The bottom line is that if we allow the across-the-board cuts to take effect, it will hurt our economy and hurt the job growth in America. We cannot allow that to happen. I expect that we can get this done before this Congress adjourns on January 2.

We also need to deal with what we call the physician fix of Medicare. We can get that done in this Congress. If not, doctors who treat our seniors and our disabled population will find that there will be almost a 30-percent cut in their physician reimbursement. Many physicians would say they are not going to treat seniors any longer with that type of reduction. We understand that. We need to make sure we take care of protecting the reimbursement rates for physicians in the Medicare system. We need to get that done and can get it done before this Congress adjourns.

We need to extend unemployment insurance. There are millions of Americans who depend on unemployment insurance in a soft economic time. They cannot find jobs. Again, this is not only important for the individuals who would be cut off if we do not extend the benefits, it is also important for our economic recovery.

We also need to extend the farm bill. We have heard the consequences if we don't do that. I had hoped they could pass a bill—which this Chamber passed—over in the House. It is unlikely we can get that done in the next 2 days, so we need to make sure we at least extend the current FARM policies in order to make sure we protect the security of our agricultural community and food prices here in America.

All of that we can get done. Hopefully we can get it done tonight but certainly before we adjourn on January 2. We need to complete that work in order to keep our economy moving and to protect the interests of the people in this Nation. Quite frankly, I don't think there is much disagreement in this Chamber as to the method to get that done.

I am disappointed that we are not dealing with a broader budget framework for our Nation. We should have done that well before now. We should do it for many reasons. For one thing, we need it. We have a deficit that is not controllable. We have to bring our deficit into better control. In order to do that, we need to reduce spending and we need the revenues in order to be able to give the right blueprint for America's future and growth.

We also need to get a broader package done because of predictability. The private sector needs to know what the rules are, and they need to know what the Tax Code and spending programs are going to look like. They need to have the confidence that we have our budget under better control. We should have gotten that done.

I have spoken several times on the floor about how we should have adopted the Simpson-Bowles framework. To me, that was a bipartisan, balanced approach for how we could have gotten out of our fiscal problems. We are not going to be able to get that done in the next 2 days before we adjourn on January 2, but we need to recognize that we need to do that.

I have heard a lot of my colleagues come to the floor to speak, and I have to clarify a couple of points. Simpson-Bowles was basically a \$4 trillion, 10-year deficit reduction package. It was booked up as the right approach. Many of us have been asking, how we can get \$4 trillion done? Well, it is interesting that with the Simpson-Bowles approach, approximately 60 percent was in spending reductions and about 40 percent was in revenue. That was a balanced way to bring down spending but also bring in the revenues we need in order to get our budget into better balance. That is the proper way to do it.

Since the recommendations of Simpson-Bowles, we have done \$1 trillion in deficit reduction in domestic discretionary spending. We have gotten that done. Those budget caps are real, and we are living within those budget caps. Sequestration—these across-the-board cuts—would get another \$1.2 trillion of spending cuts done. We should not do it through sequestration, but all of us

recognize that we need to find ways to reduce spending further.

I have talked on the floor about how we can get that done, particularly in the health care field. Yes, we have to reduce the cost of Medicare, but the way to do it is to reduce the cost of health care. We would have fewer readmissions to hospitals if we implemented the right delivery system protocols, and we would save money for our economy and Medicare. If we use preventive health care appropriately, people will enter our health care system in a less costly way, with more people insured and less use of emergency rooms. Once again, we save money.

Our committees need to come up with these solutions. It is not going to happen with two or three people getting together and coming up with a package. We need the Senate and its committees to work and come up with the right way to reduce the cost of these programs. I think we can do it basically by making the health care system more efficient, and that is much better than cutting benefits. I hope we can work together to get that done. We need to do that.

Yes, we need revenue. I heard some of my colleagues come here and say: Well, look at all the revenue we are going to get under this supposed agreement that has been talked about, which hopefully we will get as early as tonight. We already made a compromise. The rate at which no American will see any increase in taxes looks as if it will be higher than \$250,000. It has been reported it is going to be closer to \$400,000. OK. Well, now, what does that mean? That means we are going to get less revenue as a result of this agreement reached tonight. The numbers I have seen—and this may very well change based upon the agreement; hopefully, we are going to have an agreement—but somewhere around \$500 billion to \$600 billion. That is far short of the \$1.2 trillion or \$1.4 trillion we have been talking about—the whole—in order to reach that \$4 trillion number we all say is the minimum amount we need as per the Simpson-Bowles numbers. So we are going to need more revenue.

Here is the rub, here is the challenge: When we start looking to get more revenue, we are talking about now getting it through tax reform. We all understand we have to reform our Tax Code. It is difficult to do that when we have to produce revenue at the same time because people are looking at trying to do something about rates. Well, since we need the revenue for the deficit reduction package, it will be more difficult.

My point is this: I am disappointed we haven't gotten our work done well before tonight, but it is urgent that we work together, Democrats and Republicans, and get the minimum amount done the American people expect; that is, to make sure tax rates don't go up for middle-income families. We can get

that done. We can get that done as early as tonight. We should avoid the immediate sequestration order because that makes no sense—these across-the-board cuts—and figure out a way we can have a much more orderly process for reducing government spending.

We should make sure Medicare is not jeopardized by having a physician fix done in this compromise. We should make sure for the people who are getting unemployment insurance, to maintain their benefits. And we should extend the farm bill. That we can get done in the remaining hours of this legislative session.

I urge my colleagues to continue to work together. I am hopeful our leaders are negotiating a package that can be brought to the floor as early as tonight, certainly before we adjourn on January 2. If we do that, then I think we have completed as much of our business as we can, as well as setting up for the debate in the 113th Congress which will indeed be challenging. But I urge us to work together and put the interests of the American people first.

With that, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 7 p.m., with all other provisions remaining in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. HAGAN). The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I rise this evening to once again address the fiscal cliff. Clearly, the time to debate has come and gone. The simple fact is we need to act and we need to act now.

Earlier today, we heard from the President, and what I heard from the President is that he feels we have the framework for an agreement on taxes. Also, the Senate minority leader has indicated, after his negotiations with the Vice President, that he believes we have the basic agreement on a tax propo-

sposal to avoid the fiscal cliff. So let's take that step. Let's address the tax piece. Let's get it done.

Granted, the tax proposal is not the big agreement that will fully address our debt and deficit—an agreement we hope to be able to put together, an agreement I support and one that includes tax reform, bipartisan entitlement reform, and finding savings in the Federal budget. Clearly, these items all need to be addressed, and they need to be addressed on the order of \$4 trillion to get our deficit and our debt under control.

That is the type of deal I favor, and it is the kind of deal we have to get to. But if we can't do it all at once, let's do it in pieces. As the old saying goes, even the longest journey begins with a single step. If the first step is this tax deal, let's get going. To break the logjam, let's start with this piece—a tax deal that will ensure taxes are not increased for middle-class Americans. That is something we can and we must do. It does involve compromise. For example, I believe we should extend the current tax rates for all taxpayers. Real revenue comes from economic growth, not higher taxes. By closing loopholes and limiting deductions, we can create a simpler, fairer Tax Code that will help our economy grow.

President Obama, however, has a different view, so we are forced to find common ground. In this case, that means extending the tax rates we can to help as many Americans as possible avoid higher taxes. We also need to fully address sequestration. Sequestration involves automatic spending cuts. Those spending cuts hit the military disproportionately, and I believe they need to be revised. But the pressure to do that kicks in after January 1, and I believe that pressure will serve as a catalyst for Congress to come up with and pass better alternatives.

Also, we must address the debt ceiling, and it must be addressed in a way that reduces spending. We have no choice. We are borrowing 40 cents of every \$1 we spend, and that is simply not sustainable. But, again, we have to break the current logjam, and if we can't get all these things done in one package, then let's get started with what we can do. Let's get this tax piece done for as many working taxpayers as possible and immediately move on to the next tax. Quite simply, that is what Americans want us to do.

With that, I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that morning

business be extended until 9 p.m., with all other provisions remaining in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE FARM BILL

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I am here tonight to talk about agriculture and the 16 million people all across our country who have jobs because of agriculture. What I am very concerned about is the way in which an extension is being talked about as part of the larger package this evening that goes against my wishes, the wishes of our committee, the chairman in the House—Chairman LUCAS and I—our four leaders, working together on an extension that works and extends all the programs for agriculture through the end of the fiscal year, giving us time to pass a farm bill. Again, I am very concerned about what I am hearing this evening.

Let me first go back and say how appreciative I am and proud of all of us in the Senate for having passed a farm bill last June. We all know what it did—more reforms than we have seen in decades, \$24 billion in deficit reduction. I understand the proposal now—the negotiations going on are attempting to find ways to pay for some provisions in the large package. We sit here with \$24 billion in deficit reduction in a farm bill that has reforms in it that support our farmers and ranchers across the country but reforms through consolidation, efficiencies, and cutting subsidies that we have agreed should not be paid, that the country cannot afford to pay to farmers who do not need them. We worked very hard on that. We passed that in June by a large bipartisan vote. We worked together in committee in a bipartisan way.

It is deeply concerning to me that instead of working in a bipartisan way, as we have done throughout this process—even though the House never took up the bill that was passed out of their committee in a bipartisan way, we here have worked in a bipartisan way until now, until this moment, at the eleventh hour, as we are dealing with very important issues—whether we are going to make sure middle-class families do not see tax increases starting tomorrow. And no one has fought harder to make sure the middle-class families of Michigan and across the country get those tax cuts than I have, and we know we need to get things done, but we also need to make sure that in the end we are not putting agriculture farmers and ranchers at a disadvantage in the process.

So we on a bipartisan basis—in the House, in the Senate—worked together, knowing, when it became very clear that the House leadership, the Speaker, had no intention of taking up the farm bill in the House despite the fact that farmers need the certainty of a 5-year farm bill and disaster assistance—when that became clear, we turned to the